

IDEAS FOR COPING WITH STRESS

STRESS: may be seen as intense exertion, strain or effort; the wear and tear of life.

Responding to stress in a healthy way:

LIKE YOURSELF: You are a unique individual. Respect your abilities. Recognize your needs, forgive your errors.

DEFINE TASKS AT HAND: By determining what you want to accomplish and how you will proceed realistically. Work on one task at a time. Where anxiety creeps in, think about what else you may be trying to do and recheck your expectations – are they too high?

LEARN TO ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE: Some circumstances are beyond our control. Accept realistic expectations and go about achieving them, with assistance if needed. Recognize your own limitations and the limitations of others.

TALK ABOUT TROUBLES: At times, confiding worries to a special friend or trained professional may relieve your stress. Often another person can help you to see your problem in a new light or find a possible solution. Worry constructively.

RELAX CREATIVELY: Take time to do something you really enjoy, or learn the art of loafing. If you set aside time to relax, don't let anything interfere; even worrying about what you're not doing.

WORK OFF TENSIONS: Try a physical activity like walking, playing a game of tennis, gardening, chopping wood, or playing the piano.

TREAT YOURSELF TO SUFFICIENT SLEEP: Know how many hours you need. Is it 6, 8, or even 10? Having enough sleep regularly will help give you a refreshed energetic outlook on life.

TAKE MEDICATION CAUTIOUSLY: A physician may prescribe medications which help relieve tension. Use only under his or her direction. Do not take sedatives or tranquilizers prescribed for others.

*Prepared in cooperation with the psychiatric clinical area of
St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, Madison, Wisconsin*